

HOW
THE
BISHOP BUILT
HIS COLLEGE
IN
THE
WOODS



JOHN
JAMES
PIATT

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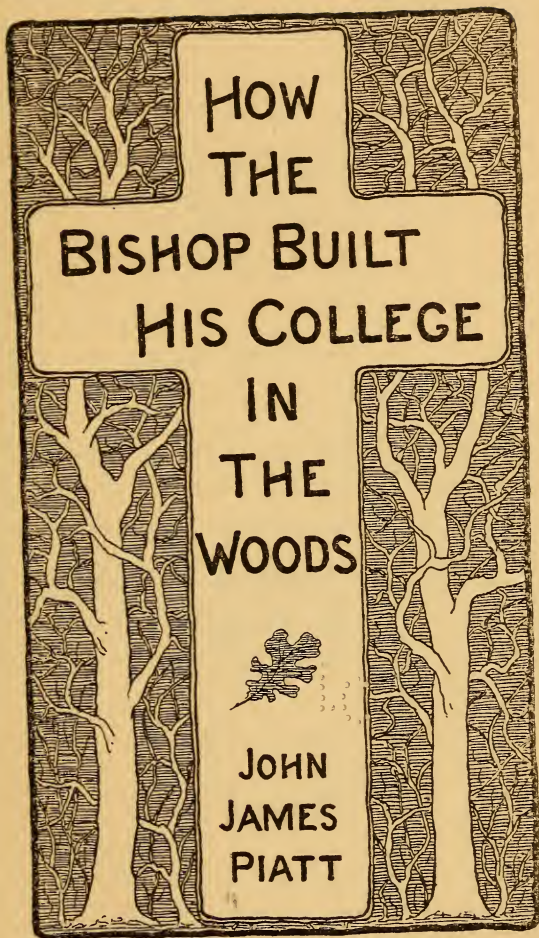
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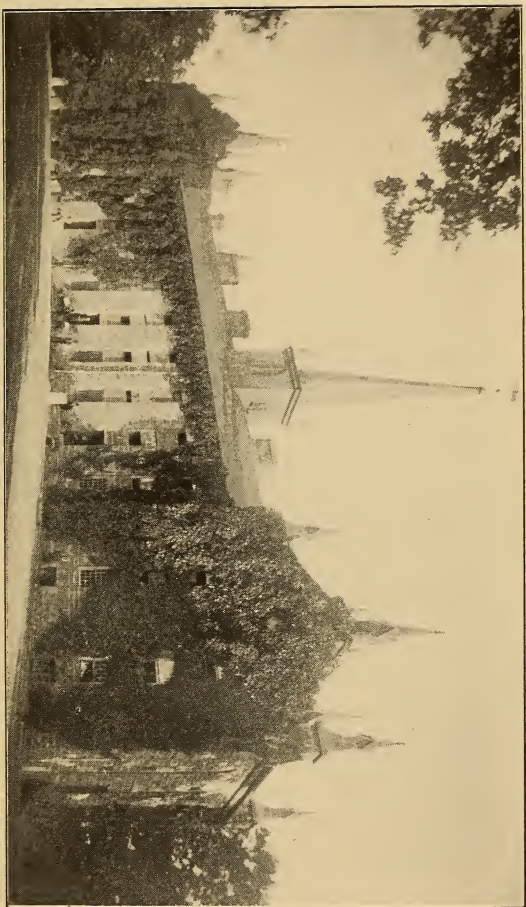
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Printed by W. E. Taylor,
HARRISON, O.

This Little Book

tells the story of a really heroic episode in the history of education: that of the founding of Kenyon College at Gambier by The Right Reverend Philander Chase, D. D., the first Bishop of Ohio.



OLD KENYON

HOW THE BISHOP BUILT HIS COLLEGE IN THE WOODS

I.

THE PIONEER BISHOPRIC AND FARM-HOUSE SEMINARY

WORTHINGTON, on the Olen-tangy, five or six miles north of Columbus, is one of the oldest and most venerable towns in Ohio. It was founded in 1803, by Colonel (also the Reverend) James Kilbourne, of Connecticut. When I last visited the place, many years ago, a large two-storied brick building, noisy with a public school, was pointed out, across the public square, as that in which the Rev. Philander Chase con-

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ducted an academy, after he first made his home at Worthington in 1817. This was one of several houses built about the year 1808, and stands a little north of St. John's Church, doubtless one of the first church-buildings of any pretensions erected for the use of the Episcopal Church west of the Allegheny mountains.

Those who have read Bishop Chase's autobiography will recall the story of his coming to Ohio, as told in that work. He came as a missionary, leaving his family to follow him, and made the journey from Hartford, Connecticut, (where he gave up a pleasant home and associations for the hardships and privations of a new country) during the winter of 1816-17. From Buffalo (then a small village) westward was an almost unbroken wilderness. On the southern shore of Lake Erie no line of public travel had yet been established, and



BISHOP CHASE

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the small lake vessels were the only means of common conveyance. But, when Mr. Chase reached Buffalo by stage coach from Canandaigua, weeks would have yet to pass before the opening of navigation, and the prospect of delay was insupportable to a man of his eager disposition. Private travel upon the ice of Lake Erie was still kept up, but as the season was far advanced, this had begun to be looked upon as dangerous. While inquiring, however, as to the means of going forward, he happened to see, as he tells us, "a man standing upright in his sled, with the horses' heads facing the lake." Here was the moment's opportunity, and he took it. He learned that the man was going twelve miles up the lake, and at once engaged to go with him that distance, trusting to Providence for further progress. As Mr. Chase seated himself, with trunk and port-

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manteau, in the farmer's sled, a gentleman named Hibbard, with port-manteau in hand, begged the same privilege. At the end of the twelve miles they were so fortunate as to find another man who promised to take them twenty-five miles further to Cattaraugus Creek, and this distance was passed over before night. Here, however, they found neither house nor shelter, but for an extra payment they prevailed upon the same person to carry them to a house known as Mack's Tavern, where they hired a horse and cutter to take them to the Four Corners, a place within twenty-five miles of the Pennsylvania State line. Mr. Chase's description of this part of his journey is graphic and striking. He says in his autobiography: "It was sunrise ere we set off. In getting out upon the lake, we had to pass between several mounds of ice, and

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sometimes to climb over large cakes, which had been thrown up together by the force of the winds and waves. But the driver knew his way, and our horse was rough-shod, and the cutter was strong and well built. The scene before us, as we came out from among the mounds of ice, was exceedingly brilliant, and even sublime. Before us, up the lake, was a level expanse of glassy ice, from two to three miles wide, between two ranges of ice-mountains, all stretching parallel with the lake shore and with one another, as far as the eye could extend, till they were lost in the distance. On this expanse and on these mountains, on the icicles, which hung in vast quantities and in an infinite variety of shapes from the rocky, lofty and sharp-angled shore on the left, the rising sun was pouring his beams. Light and shade were so distinct, brilliancy and dark-

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ness were in such proximity, and yet so blended, as to produce an effect of admiration and praise to the great Creator never before experienced. It would be in vain to express them here. What added to the adoring gratitude to God, for having made all things with such consummate skill and splendor, was what appeared as we rode along between these mountains of ice, manifesting God's providential goodness, which went hand in hand with His power and wisdom. The bald-headed eagles sat on these mountains of ice, with each a fish in his claw, fresh and clean, as if just taken from the limpid lake. What noble birds! How delicious their repast! 'Whence do they obtain these fish at this inclement season?' said the writer. 'They get them,' said the driver, 'from the top of the ice. These were thrown up and deposited by the winds and

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waves in the storms of last winter, and being immediately frozen, have been kept till this spring, when the sun thaws them out for the eagles and ravens, which, at this season, have nothing else to feed on.' As the driver told this simple story of the fish, and the storms and the eagles, how clearly appeared the providential goodness of God. 'And will not He who feedeth the eagles and the ravens, which He hath made to depend on His goodness, feed and support and bless a poor, defenseless, solitary missionary, who goeth forth, depending on His mercy, to preach His Holy Word, and to build up His Church in the wilderness?' There was an answer of faith to this question more consoling than if the wealth of the Indies had been laid at his feet."

After some further experiences on the ice, the travelers reached Con-

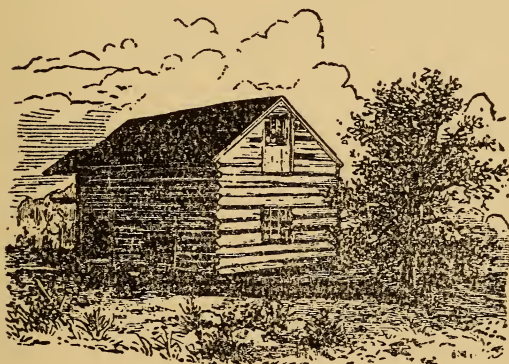
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neaut Creek (now Salem), Ohio, whence Mr. Chase made the rest of his journey alone, chiefly on horseback—preaching wherever he found scattered members of his Church on the road—reaching Worthington early in May, where he at once wrote to his wife, directing her to meet him at Cleveland, then a small village, in the middle of June.

Mr. Chase was elected Bishop of Ohio in June of the following year (1818), and consecrated at Philadelphia on the eleventh of February, 1819. He had meanwhile settled at Worthington, purchasing several lots fronting upon the public square, and a farm of one hundred and fifty acres, half a mile below, on the Columbus road—the old Sandusky pike—where he made his home. With the exception of about two years spent in Cincinnati as President of the Cincinnati College, and a year's

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absence in England, Bishop Chase continued to reside upon this farm until the year 1828, and his farmhouse, for two years after the incorporation of that institution, was to



THE FIRST BISHOP'S PALACE IN OHIO

all intents and purposes Kenyon College—it having been at first designed, according to the arrangement made with the beneficiaries in England, to establish the college upon the Bishop's Worthington farm.

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The life of an Ohio Bishop in those early days was not what would now be thought an enviable one. During the year 1820, Bishop Chase, in visiting the infant parishes of his diocese, traveled on horseback twelve hundred and seventy-one miles. His services were meanwhile for the most part their own and only reward; his farm was almost his sole support. In the autumn of the above year, on returning home, he used his last dollar to pay a man hired to attend his farm, and as he had nothing to pay future wages, he was compelled to take the care of the place into his own hands—that is, as he states it, “thrash the grain, haul and cut the wood, build the fires and feed the stock; all this work he did besides the care of the churches. The whole was deemed a part of the Christian warfare from which there was no discharge.” In

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connection with this period an interesting incident is related. One evening (and this was two years before the first thought of going to England occurred to him), having been at work all day on his farm, he wrote a letter to a friend in the East—Rev. Dr. Jarvis, of Boston—in answer to one of inquiry regarding the condition of the Church in Ohio. This letter (wherein, although with some hesitation, he made a plain statement of his discouragements) became a little marked with blood from a fresh cut in the Bishop's hand, for which he apologized by saying he had just come in from his farm-work to write it. This friend afterward, in answer to inquiries from one of the Scottish Bishops, named McFarlane, respecting the condition of the Church in America, forwarded with his own, to explain affairs in Ohio, Bishop Chase's letter just as it had come

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from the latter's hands. The daughter of this Scottish Bishop (Miss Duff McFarlane) was then in England, at the death-bed of a gentleman named John Bowdler, when she received a letter from her father, enclosing that written by Bishop Chase. She read the letter to the dying man, and was directed by him to take from his drawer a purse containing ten guineas, and by the first convenient opportunity send it to the Ohio Bishop. When the latter was in England he was invited to breakfast at the home of one of Miss McFarlane's relatives, on which occasion he was astonished to see that lady produce his blood-marked Worthington letter, inquiring if he were its author, and then hand him the ten guineas which it had won from a dying man.

Another of many interesting incidents associated with Bishop Chase's residence at Worthington, was his

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act in freeing a negro bought by him many years previous (in 1808), while stationed at New Orleans. This negro, Jack, was purchased for five hundred dollars as a house servant, but, after five months' service, ran away and went, as was supposed, to England. Bishop Chase had long endeavored to forget his loss, when, some years after settling at Worthington, he received a letter from a friend at New Orleans, telling him of the negro's return, arrest, identification, and imprisonment, and saying that he now awaited the arrival of the legal powers, to be sold for the benefit of his master. "This news," writes the Bishop, "put a new face on an old picture, every feature of which the writer had been endeavoring to forget for eleven years. And now he had reasons, peculiar to his condition, for dismissing it entirely from his mind; for although

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his once owning the slave Jack, like that of Philemon and other primitive Christians, was the result of providential necessity; and although Jack, like Onesimus, might be considered morally bound to return to his master, yet now, under present circumstances, if his master were to reclaim and sell him for money, his whole diocese would attribute it to a principle of covetousness, the great idol which, at the present day, all are so much inclined to worship, and thus his usefulness in Ohio would be destroyed forever. And though this tyrant—the love of money—rules over the hearts of so many, yet all are very jealous of the affections of the clergy in this respect, and fain would starve their bodies to save their souls. The writer saw, or thought he saw, it would be so here; for though his diocese gave him nothing to live on, yet were he to re-

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claim his servant Jack, or even to sue for the money which the New Orleans Church owed him, and which they have since, in 1840, so honorably paid him (fifteen hundred dollars), all would have fallen on his character without mercy, and he would have labored among them in vain. Therefore, with a full determination to bury the whole matter in oblivion, he wrote to his friends to emancipate his servant Jack, and let him go whithersoever he pleased; that if he would pay his prison fees and other costs of suit, it would be all his master wanted." This emancipation act, was apparently the result, certainly, of a pretty strong chain of logic, and perhaps, privately, the good Bishop did not credit himself with any special liberality in consequence. He adds, however, in making the record: "And why, the reader will ask, has this grave of oblivion

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been disturbed here? Why not suffer Jack to rest in his quiet bed? The answer is, because there was more in this than appears. Jack becomes hereafter, in this history of the writer's life, an important personage, and proves, however insignificant in himself, to be one instrument among many of the means, in the hand of Providence, of rescuing the writer from great distress in London, and, by consequence, of enabling him to found an institution, now the ornament of the West." This, of course, was Kenyon College. But I shall explain the negro's providential influence in another place.

Returning from Worthington to Columbus, I passed the Bishop's old farm, about half a mile south of the little town. The farm-house, a low, two-storied frame, stands about a hundred and fifty yards back from the Columbus turnpike, directly east

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from the first toll-gate, with a fine old apple orchard between it and the public road. After the incorporation of Kenyon College, and its first beginning there, a few additional log buildings for temporary use were erected. These have long since passed away.

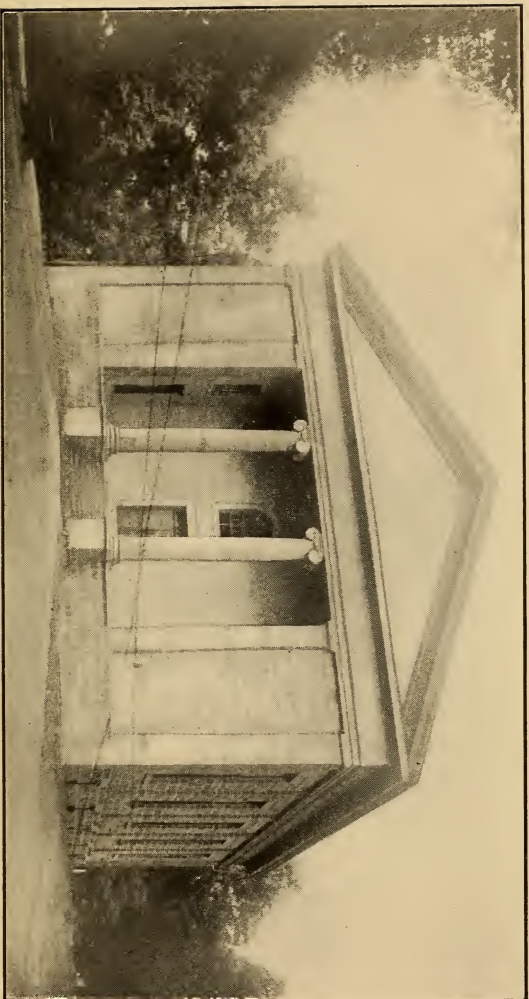
It was at this old farm-house that the late Salmon P. Chase, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, studied under the direction of his uncle, the Bishop, preparatory to entering Dartmouth College; and at about the same time a son of Henry Clay, the great Kentucky statesman, (who was helpful toward Bishop Chase's success in enlisting sympathy for his purpose in England) was also a pupil in the farm-house seminary. This last fact I mention to account for Mr. Clay's personal interest in the foundation of Kenyon College.

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II.

KENYON COLLEGE.

GRAY'S "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" has not the universal sentiment of the "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," but it expresses as no other poem, I believe, has ever yet expressed so well, the feeling one has in revisiting the scenes of school-boy experience, after long absence and the world have intervened—when he finds himself, a boy's ghost, in the midst of posterity. And when, approaching Gambier, upon the Mount Vernon road (Gambier is five miles eastward from Mount Vernon, Ohio), the dusky steeple of Kenyon College was seen far off among the tree-tops, I found myself repeating almost unconsciously—deposing meanwhile the long de-



ROSSE HALL,
(Formerly known as Rosse Chapel)

HIS COLLEGE IN THE WOODS

parted "Henry" (Henry the Sixth was the founder of Eton) in the fourth line, and substituting the name of Bishop Chase,—the first verses of that poem:

"Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the watery glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her Chase's holy shade,"—

although, if a statement of the Rev. Dr. William Sparrow, one of the early Professors of Kenyon, is to be received, Science had not, perhaps, the most assured reason for gratitude in this case. Professor Sparrow wrote, that Bishop Chase, upon one occasion, when the propriety of getting philosophical and scientific apparatus was urged by a Kentucky gentleman who had two sons in the college, answered somewhat emphatically that Science was not the object of the institution. And certainly Science was not an original object in

HOW THE BISHOP BUILT

the foundation of Kenyon College; it was Religion—the college as a secular institution was an after-thought and secondary. Science, to be admitted, must minister to Religion.

Five years after his consecration, Bishop Chase found himself in a diocese which was as yet a wide wilderness, with but five or six clergy in all; and, after an appeal to the Eastern Church for Episcopal missionaries, failed to have his hands lifted up and strengthened. He was disheartened. The graduates of Eastern colleges and of the General Episcopal Theological Seminary, at New York, did not indicate any disposition, while they could have good livings and pleasant churches near home, to venture into wild lands, and few young men could be sent from the struggling West to the East for education as ministers; the few who went were also, it appears,

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disposed to remain. There seemed little hope to the first Western Bishop, zealous for the Church, when one of his addresses to the Ohio Convention of six presbyters and deacons was noticed favorably in a prominent British Church organ. This circumstance, to which his attention was called by his son, also named Philander* (who had previously been a teacher in the Worthington seminary, but was recently ordained a minister, and was soon to die of a consumption with which he was then ill), at once suggested to him the feasibility of a Theological Seminary in Ohio, for the education of a ministry to the manor born, and also a personal mission to England for the purpose of soliciting aid therefor. The thought took immediate shape in action;—Bishop Chase made up

*This was a son by his first wife, Mary Fay, who died May 5, 1818.

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his mind to start for England the coming autumn, it being then the middle of June. As preliminary, however, he addressed a circular letter to the American Bishops, advising them of his plan, and asking their sympathy and countenance in carrying it out. He also asked the prayers of the Church for his success. Before receiving answers to his circular, he started with his family from Cincinnati (where he was then temporarily residing as President of the Cincinnati College) in his private carriage—himself the coachman, for he could afford no other—and so journeyed eight hundred miles to Kingston, New York, where his family was to remain with relatives during his absence in Europe.

Arriving at Kingston, he found a letter from Bishop Hobart, of New York, emphatically discouraging his zealous purpose—arguing its impro-

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priety, proclaiming its object unnecessary and uncalled for, asserting the prior claim of the General Seminary to help from abroad, if any were to be solicited, and indicating plainly his determination to oppose Bishop Chase's efforts (if he should persist in making them) in England, whither he was himself expecting to start at nearly the same time. This was a sort of spiritual bombshell, with the fuse manifestly burning, to Bishop Chase's nearest friends and relatives. He was made of other stuff, however, and did not change his mind. Two other letters—from Bishops Ravenscroft and Bowen—were received, approving his purpose and wishing him God-speed; other Bishops were silent, and these were presumed to be (as Bishop Hobart had informed him, indeed, that they were) against him. Bishop Chase's will was unmoved—he was

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determined to have his way. "At length," he writes, "came the 1st of October, the day fixed on while in Ohio for his embarkation. There was one clergyman in New York who ventured to accompany him to the ship, for whom in remembrance of this good deed he will never cease to pray. They walked together, while his wife and invalid son rode to White Hall in a coach, in which he embraced for the last time on earth his darling son. . . . Soon the anchor was up and the ship at sea. All the passengers seemed happy, and the writer tried to feel so; but the remembrance of what he had left behind—his sick son, his anxious wife, his helpless children, his suffering diocese, and his angry friends—forbade; and, when he looked on the waters, he knew not who, if any, would welcome him with their greeting; but he was well assured

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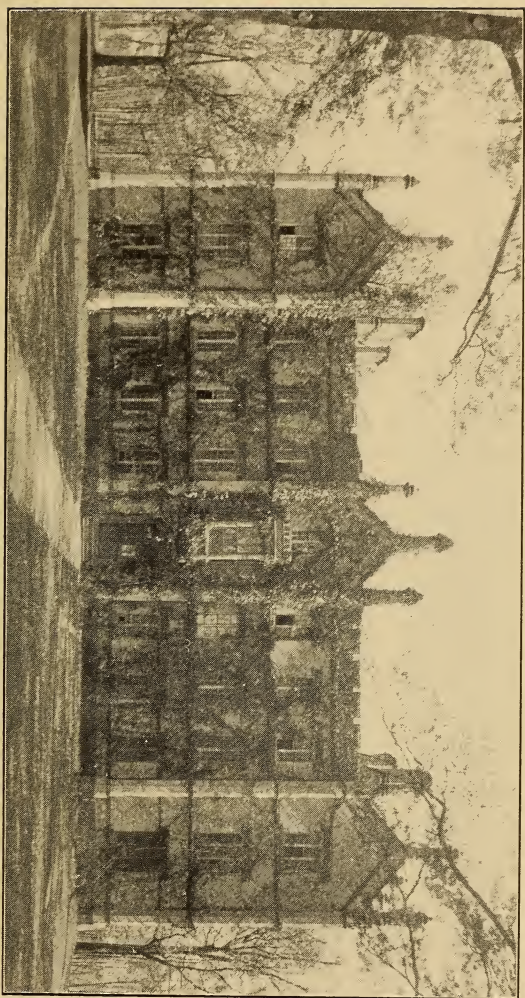
who would attempt to drive him from the English shores, for from his own lips he heard the promise." This last expression doubtless refers to a personal interview with Bishop Hobart, whose name is only indicated by a dash ("——") in Bishop Chase's autobiography. He had previously requested the prayers of the Church for a person going to sea, he tells us, adding: "In this he was denied—on what principle he never asked."

Bishop Chase landed in England early in November, 1823, and at once found the air full of ill-omens. Every-where he saw indications of what is called the cold shoulder. A paper impugning his case, motives and character, had been printed and circulated, and there was a wide-spread prejudice against him. He had, however, gained a few friends himself, and by means of a letter of introduction written to Lord Gam-

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bier, then of the British Admiralty, by Henry Clay (who had met Lord Gambier during the Peace negotiations at Ghent), he was admitted to the acquaintance of that nobleman, by whom his cause was earnestly supported, although he, too, had read and was at first prejudiced by the hostile publication. Gradually the opposition began to give way; other friends were won, and finally a stroke of Providence, as the Bishop chose to look upon it, created a strong current of feeling in his favor.

I have mentioned, as an episode in Bishop Chase's life at Worthington, the freeing of his New Orleans negro servant, Jack, who, after an interval of eleven years, had been arrested and held subject to his master's orders. In 1824, the British Parliament was much divided on the proposed abolition of slavery in the West Indies, and whoever showed a



BEXLEY HALL.

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favorable disposition toward the enslaved race was sure of a large adherence of friends. At this time a benevolent gentleman named Joseph Butterworth, a friend in sympathy and acting with Wilberforce, was also a member of Parliament. Through intimate acquaintance with the police, according to Bishop Chase, Mr. Butterworth knew that the Bishop had been in London ever since he took up his residence in a certain quarter, except during a visit to the north of England. "He knew," Bishop Chase writes, "that he was there unnoticed and unknown, from November till after his return in the spring from the north, and he had thought little of him because others did so. 'And how,' the reader will ask, 'came Mr. Butterworth to think otherwise of the neglected being living in No. 10 Furtherstone Buildings, High Holborn?'" Simply

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because Dr. Robert Dow, of New Orleans, came to town. ‘And how could this gentleman influence so sound a judgment as that of Mr. Joseph Butterworth?’” Dr. Dow, the New Orleans friend, who had written to Bishop Chase regarding his negro servant, and through whom the latter was emancipated, had started to make his home in his native land, Scotland. Wishing to invest some funds, while stopping in London on his way, he had consulted Joseph Butterworth, and in the conversation which followed Mr. Butterworth had inquired, since Dr. Dow had come from America, whether he knew Bishop Chase. Yes, Bishop Chase had once been his pastor at New Orleans. Then as to his real character? “Always good,” was the answer;—why was it questioned? He then learned of Bishop Chase’s presence in England, and of the

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peculiar neglect shown him. Dr. Dow expressed surprise. Mr. Butterworth observed that there must be something singular in this gentleman, or he would not have remained voluntarily in the position wherein he was regarded by the public—Bishop Chase, in order to keep the peace of the Church, having stoically refrained from answering the charges printed and circulated to his prejudice. Dr. Dow replied that he never knew anything singular in Bishop Chase except in the case of his emancipating a yellow slave, adding that he hardly presumed that would hurt him in England, although in New Orleans it had been considered foolish as well as singular. Doctor Dow then related to Mr. Butterworth the story of the escaped house-servant, and of his emancipation by Bishop Chase. This gained the Bishop a sudden tide of friend-

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ship and favor, which was unaccountable until some time after, when a letter from his old New Orleans physician shed light upon it. In this way, according to the Bishop's interpretation of events, the negro, Jack, became a founder—or a powerful instrument and lever in the foundation—of Kenyon College. Mr. Butterwoth had sought Bishop Chase, invited him to his house, introduced him to influential friends, and the Ohio Church-College stock was at once popular. Miss McFarlane, the Scotch Bishop's daughter, who showed Bishop Chase his own letter written to Rev. Dr. Jarvis from Worthington, with the mark of his bloody sweat upon it, also became a valuable friend, securing the favor of Lady Rosse, whose subscription built Rosse Chapel, named after her, at Gambier.

The success of Bishop Chase's

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mission abroad was now assured. He returned to America in the early autumn of 1824, with a subscription of about five thousand guineas (twenty-five thousand dollars), a sum much larger in effect then than now. Among the names upon the list, which included several hundred of the clergy and laity, were some of the most eminent ones in Church and State of the Kingdom—such as the Lord Bishops of London, Durham, St. David's, and Chester; the Deans of Canterbury and Salisbury; Lords Kenyon, Gambier, Bexley, and Barham; the dowager Countess of Rosse, and Miss Hannah More. The subscriptions ranged from one pound upward to over four hundred pounds sterling, and the transmission of the funds awaited only the action of Henry Clay, who was named as an umpire in the selection of a location for the contemplated institution.

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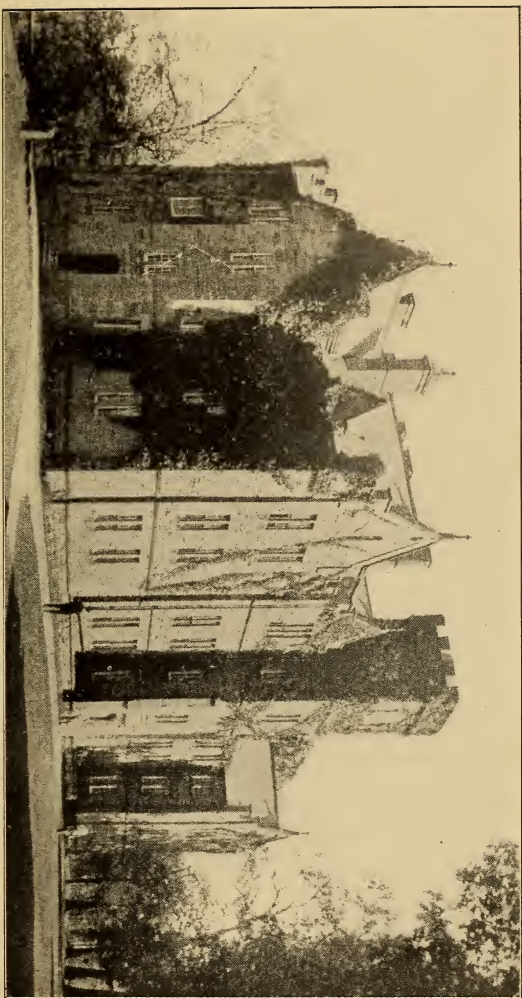
It had been originally intended to establish the Theological Seminary and College upon Bishop Chase's Worthington farm, he having agreed to give it for that purpose; but it was provided that if another more desirable location were gratuitously offered, then Bishop Chase's land should revert to him. The Theological Seminary of Ohio was begun, however, upon the farm near Worthington, under an act of incorporation passed by the Ohio Legislature, in 1825; and in January, 1826, a supplementary act created the faculty of a college, under the designation of "The President and Faculty of Kenyon College." Mrs. Elizabeth Reed, of Putnam, Ohio, meanwhile offered to give a thousand acres of land situated on Alum Creek, several miles northeast of Worthington, as a seat for the College, and for a time this seemed pre-

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ferable in the eyes of the Bishop to the Worthington land. But there was a contest of opinion, among those now become interested, as to the most desirable location; several influential gentlemen of the State, including Charles Hammond, Rufus King, John Bailhache, Col. John Johnston, and others, who were among the original Trustees—desiring to place the College near or in one of the larger cities. Cincinnati, Chillicothe, and one or two other places were suggested. Bishop Chase opposed his will to these, holding it of vital importance that the institution so dear to his soul, and for which he had already given so much in time, patience, and energy, should be beyond the immediate influence of cities, on wide lands of its own, through which it could have a power by right of the soil, and exercise a strong local influence and

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government. Col. John Johnston, one of the Trustees, criticized this theory, saying that to build up a literary institution from the stump in the woods was a chimerical project;—it would surely fail and become an object of ridicule. Presently, after the Bishop had begun to make some clearings on Mrs. Reed's Alum Creek lands, his attention was directed by Daniel S. Norton and Henry B. Curtis, of Mount Vernon, to a large tract of wild land in Knox county, owned by William Hogg, of Brownsville, Pennsylvania, and this proved so desirable in his eyes that he at once made a contract to purchase it, subject to the approval of the Trustees and of Henry Clay. This purchase, after considerable debate, was finally approved; when Mr. Hogg consented to make one-fourth of the price of the land (eight thousand acres at three dollars per



ASCENSION HALL,

HIS COLLEGE IN THE WOODS

acre) a free gift, and, for eighteen thousand dollars, conveyed the title to the Trustees of the Theological Seminary of the Diocese of Ohio.

This land, occupied by Kenyon College for over half a century, was a wilderness, but a beautiful one, and as healthy and happy a location for a college as could be found in the Ohio Valley.

In June, 1826, Bishop Chase started with his little army of occupation for the chosen spot, fifty miles away, which he named Gambier Hill, after his first powerful and steadfast English friend, Lord Gambier. "His hired man and his little son, Dudley, were the only persons who accompanied him from Worthington to the promised land on this lonely journey," the Bishop writes, adding: "And must it be called lonely? Nay, he felt it otherwise. He experienced a consciousness of Divine aid in com-

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mencing this great work, which convinced him he was not alone. God was with him, and, though like Jacob, he should have nothing but the ground to rest on, and a stone for a pillow, he trusted that God's presence would be his support." Gambier Hill, upon which Bishop Chase fixed the location of the college buildings, is a level ridge running north and south, elevated about one hundred and fifty feet above the Kokosing, an Indian stream, which flows from a pretty valley on the eastern side around its southern base, and, after making a sort of gigantic ox-bow in the wide lowlands to the southeast, disappears far away to the south and west. From its top a variety of as charming landscape is visible as perhaps any outlook in the State of Ohio affords. The valley of the Kokosing eastward is the picture of "a smiling land;"

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westward are even yet the suggestions of an unconquered wilderness. Oaks predominate in the surrounding forest;—how gorgeous with gold and crimson I remember them in far-back autumnal seasons! Here is the picture, drawn by Bishop Chase, of Gambier Hill, at his first occupation: "The whole surface of the hill was then a windfall, being a great part of it covered with fallen and upturned trees, between and over which had come up a second growth of thick trees and bushes. It was on such a place as this (proverbially impervious even to the hunters after wolves, which made it their covert), that the writer pitched his tent, if such it might be called. On the south end or promontory of this hill (near to which, below, ran the road used by the first settlers), grew some tall oak trees, which evidently had es-

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caped the hurricane in days of yore. Under the shelter of these some boards in a light wagon were taken nearly to the top of the hill; there they were dropped, and it was with these the writer's house was built, after the brush was with great difficulty cleared away. Two crotched sticks were driven into the ground, and on them a transverse pole was placed, and on the pole was placed the brush, inclining to the ground each way. The ends or gable to this room, or roof-shelter, were but slightly closed by some clapboards rived on the spot from a fallen oak tree. The beds to sleep on were thrown on bundles of straw, kept up from the damp ground by a kind of temporary platform, resting on stakes driven deeply into the earth. This was the first habitation on Gambier Hill, and nearly on the site where now rises the noble edifice of Kenyon College."

HIS COLLEGE IN THE WOODS

Such an "opening" as this would not surprise us if made by an adventurous pioneer, with the object of building a rude home in the backwoods, but it appears in a different light when looked upon as the work of a learned Bishop,—who, a year before, had been entertained by British Lords and Ladies, and treated with respect and reverence by high dignitaries of the Church of England,—preparatory to founding an institution which he fondly hoped would in time be a great center of light and culture. What a task-work had this one man set before himself, and how strenuously he wrought to accomplish his purpose! "It is said," Bishop Chase writes in allusion to this seemingly "forlorn advance": "It is said, by those not intimately acquainted with the facts and the nature of things, that the writer might have avoided the difficulties

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and exposures here described by residing in the nearest village, or even by taking shelter, for a time, in the little log cabins already erected on the premises, from one to two miles off. Alas! if such had been his course, no beginning would have been made to the great work. He wanted money to pay a resolute person to go forward in a work like this, if such could be found; he wanted money to pay for his own board in a village* four miles off; he wanted money to hire even his common hands and teams,—those he used here being the hands and wagons usually employed on his own farm at Worthington. Now, if ever there was a necessity for saying come, and not go, to work, that necessity existed here, the donations hitherto collected being all pledged for the lands. The

*Mt. Vernon.

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word was said, and, under Providence, to this he owes his final success."

The first thing done was to dig a well; and this reminds me that Bishop Chase began his great undertaking with a temperance reform. He stipulated that no liquor should be used by the men employed in his building. He feared it might compromise in some way the future College. This caused him some trouble. There was, soon after the beginning, what may be called an incipient whisky rebellion among his hired hands. They at length sent him a petition asking for a glass three times a day, saying, at the close: "We think the expense will be repaid to the institution tenfold." The Bishop appointed a meeting with them, took his seat, somewhat embarrassed, upon a piece of slightly elevated timber, told them quietly

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the story of his life and struggles, moved many of them to tears,—and all went to work on the original temperance platform!

In a letter to his wife, written soon after his arrival on the ground, he says: "If you ask how I get along without money, I answer, the Lord keepeth me. What do you think of His mercy in sending good Mr. Davis with half a cheese from his mother, and twenty-five dollars from his father, presented to me out of pure regard to the great and good work which God enables me to carry on? Mr. Norton has sent me three hands for a short time. James Meleck came one day, and old Mr. Elliot another. We have built us a tent cabin, and if we had any one to cook for us we should live. It is impossible to make the hands board themselves. We must find them provisions ourselves, or have



THE COLLEGE CHAPEL
(The Church of the Holy Spirit)

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none to help us. If we can get the poor neighbors to cook a little for us we do well. Judy Holmes has been here for three days, and is now engaged in surveying the north section. The streets and roads in this, the south section, have been laid out, as far as can be, till we find water. If this can not be obtained here we shall move to some other quarter. Pray send me, by Rebecca, two more beds and bedding similar to those I brought with me. I write you this by a poor, dim hog's-lard lamp, which, shining askance on my paper, will hardly permit me to say how faithfully I am your affectionate husband."

Here it appears just and proper to say, that, if the burden Bishop Chase had assumed was a heavy one, his broad shoulders were well fitted to bear it, particularly as he had an efficient helpmate in his wife—(she

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was his second wife, Sophia May Ingraham, whom he married in 1819) —of whom it has been written: “Mrs. Chase entered with her whole soul into her husband’s plans. She was a lady perfectly at home in all the arts and minutiae of housewifery; as happy in darning stockings for the boys, as in entertaining visitors in the parlor; in making a bargain with a farmer in his rough boots and hunting blouse, as in completing a purchase from an intelligent and accomplished merchant; and as perfectly at home in doing business with the world about her, and in keeping the multifarious account of her increasing household, as in presiding at her dinner table, or dispensing courtesy in her drawing-room.”

Bishop Chase spent the following autumn and winter in the Eastern States, soliciting further assistance

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toward the completion of the work begun by him, issuing there a "Plea on behalf of Religion and Learning in Ohio," from which season of effort about eighteen thousand dollars were realized. In June, 1827, the cornerstone of Kenyon College was laid, and the neighborhood grew busy with the various workmen. In August of that year the Bishop wrote to his wife as follows: "The great work progresses slowly but surely. The basement story is now completed. The tall scaffold-poles now rear their heads all around the building. The joist timbers are now taking their places, and the frames of the partition walls below are putting together. The masons are pressing the carpenters, the carpenters the teamsters, and the teamsters the hewers. The whip-sawyers are not able to keep up with the demand in their line. The blacksmiths, two

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in number, are driven very hard to keep sharp the hammers and picks, repair the chains, mend wagons and make new irons for them, and shoes for twenty-eight cattle in the teams. Our log house, additional to that you saw, will receive its roof to-morrow, and, in the beginning of the week, I trust, will be occupied as a dining-room. The stone gothic building, for a Professor's house, must soon be plastered. I go to Mount Vernon to-morrow for a thousand things, and will put this in the post-office for you. We have now nearly sixty hands, all busy and faithfully at work; an account of each is taken every night." During all this week-day labor, the Bishop tells us, he was never unmindful of his sacred calling as a clergyman, officiating at Gambier, at Mount Vernon, or elsewhere in the neighborhood. Visiting Worthington in October, and

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finding his wife ill with typhoid fever, he feels the necessity of leaving her (convalescence, however, had begun), asking her, the following evening, in a letter: "Was this, my desertion of you, from my own inclination? No! Nothing but the great duty of overseeing what God hath so miraculously put into my hands could have persuaded me to do this. Even as it is, I feel a pang which I can not describe to you. My eyes fill with tears when I think how I left you in sickness. But God's will be done! My exile here is the result of this submission."

Soon after he sees the good policy of building a saw-mill—whip-sawyers were not sufficient, and the only saw-miller in the vicinity demanded exorbitant prices for lumber. The workmen approve, and the work is begun at once, all hands assisting. A dam is nearly com-

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pleted, a long mill-race across a neck of low land (where a bend of the stream has formed the great ox-bow already mentioned) is commenced. The news of this extravagant undertaking travels through the diocese, and the Bishop's plans are pronounced rash and visionary. The digging of the race is begun—the tail-race, indeed, is almost finished; but the earth-scraper progresses slowly. Meanwhile the first story above the basement of the main college building is erected, on one side, as far as the windows. But how about the mill-race? The equinocial storm is due and dreaded. It arrives. The rains fell and the floods came. The Kokosing rose to an unusual height, and, somewhat aggravated by the dam, overflowed the lowlands. As Noah from the Ark, the anxious Bishop looked down from Gambier Hill. He felt that all was

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lost. The dam could not be seen. The sky, however, cleared; the waters subsided; the dam was still there, and the head-race was there—a channel of running water already—a special gift of Providence, that saved a large expense of money and labor. “This mark of Providential goodness,” writes the Bishop, “was of signal service in building Kenyon College.”

This miracle of the mill-race won over to the Bishop’s side, it seems, the skeptical driver of the local stage-coach, who was hitherto of the opposition, sneering and jesting at the mad college-builder. One day, shortly afterwards, it is related, his carriage being full and the driver being seated, by its construction, in juxtaposition with the passengers, a conversation was begun, in which the plan of Kenyon College was condemned and ridiculed, and its failure

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predicted. This was affirmed as the opinion of all in the coach, and then asserted to be that of all people throughout the country. "The Bishop has no friends," they said; "his plan is hopeless." "You are a little too fast," said the driver; "a little too fast, gentlemen, in what you say. Bishop Chase has one friend." "And who is he?" was the common question. "It is one," the driver said, "whom if you knew you would not despise; and knowing his favor to the Bishop, you would no longer speak thus." "And who is he? Who can this friend be?" was the reiterated question. "Gentlemen," said the driver, solemnly, "God is Bishop Chase's friend, and my proof is the fact that He caused the late equinoctial rain-storm to dig his mill-race for him, thus saving him the expense of many hundred dollars."

It is hardly worth while to con-

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tinue in detail this story of a heroic persistence: whatever the results of the college itself have been or may be, Kenyon College, named after Lord Kenyon, was built; the central building was completed with the Bishop's own supervision; Rosse Chapel (endowed by Lady Rosse, and named after her), was begun; the College, having been removed from Worthington (where it had been carried on meanwhile upon the Bishop's farm), in 1828, was recognized as a living fact—and Bishop Chase was the one man, under God, who, against many and great obstacles, had made it such. His struggle in its behalf was a fight with the Dragon, and he, a true Knight of the Red Cross, came off conqueror.

But, if I am rightly informed, Bishop Chase was better fitted to build than to govern. No man could

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have done the task-work he had accomplished without something more than selfish devotion. There may have been a ground-work of personal ambition underneath his purpose, but it must still have been a noble one, and breathed the true air of religion. Soon after the removal of the College to Gambier, divisions began to show themselves between the Bishop, who was ex officio President of the Institution, and the Faculty. Bitter feelings grew up between him and some of the Professors. Perhaps the Bishop, who did not always think it necessary to attend the Faculty's meetings, was too free to ignore its judgments and decisions, and make college law a matter of his own personal discretion. His disposition was not, other things considered, an unfortunate one in planning and building the material structure, but seemed doubt-

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fully fitted to conduct the moral and spiritual institution. I have read some of the various documents printed regarding this matter, and am inclined to think Bishop Chase was in error. He was arbitrary, impetuous, fierce, and unjust, at times. The disagreements at length led to his resignation, in 1829, at a time when his services in the material affairs of the College (whose buildings were still in progress) were thought indispensable. Consequently his resignation was not accepted by the Diocesan Convention. Another year having passed, and the state of ill-feeling and jealousy yet existing, Bishop Chase again presented his resignation to the Convention held that year at Gambier. This time the resignation was accepted,—perhaps contrary to the expectation of the Bishop; for it is reported that, on the day following, he

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shook the dust of Kenyon from his feet, mounted his horse, rode hastily away, and betook himself to the place of a relative in Holmes county, called by him "the Valley of Peace," leaving his family to pack up and follow him at their leisure. He never returned. After having settled for a while in Michigan, he went to Illinois, where, at a place called by him "The Robin's Nest," he founded a new institution known as Jubilee College. A gentlemen described "The Robin's Nest" to me as a row of three or four little log houses, terminated by a still smaller frame building. We may smile at the picture, but we should remember that stone walls do not a college make any more than they make a prison—the learned man, the learned body of men, make a college. This was the characteristic beginning of Jubilee College, of which otherwise

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I know nothing. Bishop Chase, who then became the first Episcopal Bishop of Illinois, spent the remainder of his life in that State, dying there in 1852.

Bishop Chase deserved the gratitude of his Church in Ohio by his efforts in its behalf; and, perhaps, there was hardly so much tenderness shown to his temperament as he had earned by his long suffering, heroic endurance and persistent energy. Yet, though in effect banished from the place for which he wrought and fought so long, Kenyon College is, to-day, with every stone in its every building, his monument and witness. A portrait of him, said to be life-like, painted on the commission of some British admirer and friend, while he was in England in 1824, was sent to the United States, and presented to the college. I saw it in the library. It shows, I think, some strong points

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of resemblance to his nephew, the late distinguished Chief Justice, in his younger days. And I may here remark, by the way, that the remains or the Acland printing-press, purchased for the use of the Ohio Episcopal College, with a separate subscription raised among the ladies of the English nobility by Lady Acland, wife of Sir Thomas Acland, during the Bishop's mission to England, were pointed out to me in the back door-yard of a little private printing-office in Gambier.

I shall not go into a careful further history of the College. Bishop Chase's record, in connection with it, seems to me unusually interesting, and I have merely tried to sketch it with the help of his own autobiography, added to whatever personal knowledge I possessed or could obtain. I may say, however, that the College for some years after the

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old Bishop's exit, had a struggle for life; and its progress largely depended on often-repeated "beggings." (This word was given to me, as the right one, by an accomplished gentleman of Gambier.*) Bishop McIlvaine, his successor, also took up one or two subscriptions in England—the first as long ago as 1835—and several in the United States.

The buildings of Kenyon College are as noble, if not so extensive, as those of any institution of learning in America. The college building proper is a large and handsome one, of dark gray sand-stone, one hundred and ninety feet long and four stories high, including the basement, with turrets, pinnacles, and a belfry, topped with a spire one hundred and

*Rev. Alfred Blake, since deceased, a schoolmate and classmate of Chief Justice Chase—born, like him, at Keene, N. H.—who, for many years, kept an excellent classical school for boys at Gambier.

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seventeen feet high, in the center. This edifice stands upon the southern end of Gambier Hill, fronts northward, and overlooks the valley of the Kokosing for many miles. Half a mile to the north of the college building is Bexley Hall (named after Lord Bexley), erected for the use of the Theological Seminary exclusively. It is an elegant and tasteful structure. Half way between these two buildings, on either side of the main street or avenue, is the town or village of Gambier; a little to the east of which, but hidden by trees, is Milnor Hall, designed for the grammar-school, and named after Lady Milnor. An extensive park encloses most of the college buildings. Upon the western side of the path through the park is Rosse Chapel—built with the endowment of, and named after, Lady Rosse—a large, low building in sandstone, of



THE PRAYER CROSS

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Ionic architecture. Nearly opposite, on the eastern side, is Ascension Hall, a fine large, four-storied edifice, of light-colored freestone. This contains the recitation rooms, society apartments, College library, etc. Near the northern entrance of the park, and on the eastern side, is the Church of the Holy Spirit, completed in 1871, a gift of the members of Ascension Parish, New York City, and of their former rector, Bishop Bedell. This is built of freestone, and is one of the most beautiful ecclesiastical structures in the West.

Although it can not be said of Kenyon's graduates, as the poet Gray sang of the alumni of Cambridge, in the "realms of empyrean day":

"There sit the sainted Sage, the Bard divine,
The few whom Genius gave to shine
Through every unborn age and undis-
covered clime;"—

for Kenyon has yet sent forth neither

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a Milton nor a Newton; nevertheless, among its students or graduates have been men of eminence in our national politics and jurisprudence, such as Chief Justice Chase, who was also Secretary of the United States Treasury under President Lincoln; Edwin M. Stanton, the famous Secretary of War in Mr. Lincoln's cabinet; Henry Winter Davis, prominent as a Maryland Congressman, orator and patriot, during the war of the Southern secession; Rutherford B. Hayes, late President of the United States; the late David Davis, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and Senator from Illinois; Hon. Stanley Matthews, also a Judge of the United States Supreme Court; with a long list of clergymen, lawyers, and others, scattered throughout the country, and having local distinction and influence.

III.

POSTSCRIPT.

I WILL venture to add, here, by way of postscript, that I had known Worthington in my early boyhood—my father's home being five miles below on the Olentangy (he once owned the land, including mills there, now comprising Olentangy Park at North Columbus)—long before I had any knowledge of Bishop Chase or Kenyon College, and it was after revisiting Gambier, where I had been a student, and also Worthington, that I originally wrote the foregoing sketch of their history, which appeared in two divisions accordingly. Bishop Chase's career, after he ceased to be identified actively with my sometime

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alma mater, has not so especially interested me, I will confess. His name had become only a tradition at Gambier, when I first attended the College—and “the Bishop’s Backbone” was the familiar name (and I hope I have sufficiently indicated that he was possessed of a well-developed backbone, physically and morally,) for a wooded hilltop on the road to Mt. Vernon, where, it was said, he used to lie in wait for and confront truant students in the old days. Whatever personal interest I have since felt in him is perhaps chiefly due to the fact that his more famous nephew, the late Chief Justice, Salmon P. Chase, became long after my college days, and remained until the close of his life,—by a happy accident, which I need not here explain—one of my kindest and best friends. Yet it is certainly very interesting to recall that Bishop

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Chase not only founded Jubilee College in the then wild lands of Illinois, but he also became in 1835 the first Bishop of that great State, where my father took us to make our new home after I had left Kenyon myself. Bishop Chase remained, as before stated, at the head of his Church in Illinois until his death in 1852.

I first went to school at Gambier through the friendly prompting of the Rev. Dr. William C. French, who had been at Worthington, I believe, in the farm-house seminary, and whom I last saw while he was in charge of St. John's Church there, when, after being a year at Gambier, my mother and I visited Mrs. French at the little Worthington parsonage. I had, however, previously known Dr. French at Columbus when he was in charge of St. Paul's Church, and I had lived one winter at his house there, when he

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was employed in some editorial capacity by an uncle of mine who for many years owned and published "The Ohio State Journal." Dr. French was long afterwards editor of "The Standard of the Cross," a leading Church paper, first at Cleveland, Ohio, and later at Philadelphia. It happened that when it had been arranged I was to go to Gambier—carrying letters of introduction kindly given me by Dr. French—the very first railway journey I ever made was begun early one beautiful morning in June when my father drove up with me to the little station east of Worthington to go aboard a train northward on the then round-about way to Mt. Vernon and Gambier. I can yet feel the quick tremor of the gently-moving train at its starting, and recall the dewy, flying wooded landscapes. How homesick I was on that first railway journey,

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of which I once wrote, fondly remembering it:

—“Renewed

Mix my dull pang, my eager thrill.

’Twas morn. When evening fell, I stood
A boy on Gambier Hill.”

Since my last visit to Gambier many years have passed, and there have been, of course, many changes. Rev. Dr. Norman Badger, long since departed, was my first acquaintance and friend at Gambier, through an introduction from Dr. French. Professor (the Rev.) George Denison, under whom I studied mathematics, I recall as very kind to me (he marked me, it is pleasant to remember, number 1 in algebra and geometry)—he, too, is long since gone into the shadow where is the only enduring substance, perhaps. Professor John Trimble, the dear old impetuous Irish-born Professor of Greek and Latin, (he was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, in which

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we had many friends while we were in Ireland,—Dr. George F. Shaw, and Professor R. Y. Tyrrell, his son-in-law; Professors Edward Dowden, George Francis Savage-Armstrong, and others) has long since passed away, as has more recently his son, Rev. Dr. John Trimble, jr., who was Adjunct Professor of the classics in my student days, and whom I knew later in Kentucky—where I was married by him—and at Washington up to the close of his life about two years ago. My old college mates, associates and friends at Kenyon, Richard George Holland, James E. Homans among the rest,—where are they? How useless to cry to them, as I once did : :

“O fresh of face, O blythe of heart,
Come back, come back, come back ! ”

They would appear, if at all, few and far between.

Rosse Chapel, partially burnt some

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years ago, was restored and called Rosse Hall instead. Milnor Hall, also in large measure destroyed by fire, had been rebuilt and incorporated into a handsome new structure, with an eastern wing known as Delano Hall—built with money contributed by the late Columbus Delano, who was Secretary of the Interior under President Grant's first administration,—as well for the use of the preparatory or grammar school as the military academy established some years ago in connection with it. And, while I have this paragraph yet in hand, the sad word comes that Milnor Hall and Delano Hall have both been suddenly destroyed by fire (February 24, 1906,)—a terrible calamity—with loss of several young lives and severe injuries to other students. It is understood that these buildings will be restored. Besides these, other at-

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tractive and beautiful buildings had been added, including Hanna Hall, a gift of the late United States Senator Mark Hanna. The beautiful "Prayer Cross" also, since I last visited Gambier, has been set up, between Hanna Hall and the old College. On this Cross is carved the inscription: "On this spot the prayers of Holy Church were said for the first time upon Gambier Hill the third Sunday after Trinity, A. D. 1826."

But, in looking back across the long, misty, many-arched bridge on which I have been realizing the Vision of Mirza, I do not recognize anything at Gambier half so dear to my memory as the gray, tall spire far-off among distant treetops, where the Bishop Built His College in the Woods.

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